

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 15th February, 1921.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber at Eleven of the Clock.
The Honourable the President in the Chair.

The Honourable the President: Members desiring to take their seats, will please advance to the table to take the Oath or Affirmation in the manner prescribed.

There was no Member present to take the Oath.

The Honourable the President: The next item on the List of Business is the asking and answering of questions.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

CLEARING OF LETTER BOXES IN VILLAGES.

1. **Mr. M. K. Reddiyar :** (a) Is Government aware of a general complaint from the village population that the present system of delivering letters and closing the post boxes is far from satisfactory ; and of a demand as a remedy that the post boxes should be cleared, at least two hours after the delivery of the letters, to facilitate the posting of replies to the letters received ?

(b) Do Government propose to inquire with a view to make the necessary changes ?

Mr. C. A. Innes : Where there is a post office in a village, letters are delivered as soon as possible after they are received. On the other hand the time at which letters are despatched from the village is regulated by the hour of departure of the nearest mail train.

In villages where there is no post office but only a letter box, the postman delivers letters in the village and before leaving it clears the local letter box. As he takes some time delivering letters or paying money orders in the village it is likely that he does find replies, to some of the letters delivered, in the letter box when he clears it and, in practice, if requested to do so, he waits for a few minutes for urgent letters.

With the present establishment it is impracticable to require the village postman to wait two hours at each village and the cost of carrying out the proposed change would be out of all proportion to the advantages to be gained by the villagers.

RATES FOR TELEGRAMS AND RAILWAY FARES, ETC.

2. **Mr. B. Venkatapatiraju :** Do the Government propose to reduce at an early date, (1) the inland telegram rates and (2) fares for third class passengers

' With regard to the Army, our military services are at present undergoing a process of reorganization, and, in actual fact, practically all the existing appointments are at present on a provisional basis. At the point which the scheme for reorganization has so far reached, it can only be said that it is proposed to reduce a large number of regimental appointments, while, on the other hand, it will probably be necessary to create permanently certain new appointments, in order to admit of the improvement of the staff and departmental organization and to provide for certain new services, such as the Royal Air Force and Mechanical Transport. Appointments carrying rates of pay in excess of Rs. 500 on the military side are, apart from appointments on the clerical establishments, almost invariably filled by officers holding King's Commissions, the main qualification for which is that the candidate must be a British subject and must have passed successfully through Sandhurst or Woolwich. Arrangements have been made, since the date of the Armistice, to give a certain number of King's Commissions to Indian gentlemen.

As regards the higher military clerical appointments, a number of these are held by Indians, who have precisely the same opportunities for advancement as Europeans. The present intention is to make the clerical establishments at Army Headquarters civilian in status and to throw open appointments, as far as possible, to Indians who are qualified under the rules governing recruitment for the Secretariat offices of the Government of India'.

INDIAN EXCHANGE.

67. **Mr. Manmohandas Ramji:** (a) What have been the highest and lowest points between which the Indian exchange has fluctuated during the year 1920, and what were the dates on which these points were reached?

(b) Has it been found possible to maintain and support the rate of 2s. fixed by the Government?

(c) What steps, if any, are proposed to be taken by the Government to maintain and support the rate of 2s. fixed by them.

(d) If it is not possible to maintain and support the rate of 2s. fixed by the Government, will they be prepared to reconsider the recommendations of the Majority Report of the Committee on which the recommendations of the Government of India were based?

The Honourable Mr. W. M. Hailey:

(a) Highest rate	2s. 10½d. Calcutta on 11th February 1920.
Lowest rate	1s. 4½d. Calcutta and Bombay several days in Decem- ber 1920.

(b), (c) and (d). I may refer the Honourable Member to the answer which I shall shortly be giving to Mr. Garu in a similar question.

SLAUGHTER OF CATTLE.

68. **Mr. Manmohandas Ramji:** Will the Government be pleased to state :—

(a) The number of slaughter-houses in British India maintained by municipalities, military authorities, private or other agencies, and where they are located?